

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-6. (canceled)

Claim 7. (currently amended) A method of performing cardiac ablation comprising:

(a) providing an ablation device including a balloon in the left atrium of the heart of a mammalian subject and inflating the balloon such that the device is in an operative configuration having opposite proximal and distal directions, with a distal side of the device wall of the balloon facing substantially in the distal direction toward a region of the wall of the atrium to be ablated, such region being disposed outside of the ostium of a pulmonary vein; and

(b) while the ablation device is in said operative configuration, injecting a contrast medium into the subject on the distal side of said ablation device and obtaining one or more images depicting the contrast medium in at least a portion of the atrium so as to visualize the position of the ablation device relative to the atrium; and

(c) ablating the region of the wall of the atrium using the ablation device without ablating within the pulmonary vein or the ostium,

wherein the method is performed without forcibly engaging a structure with the wall of the pulmonary vein or the ostium.

Claim 8. (canceled)

Claim 9. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 7 wherein said contrast medium is an x-ray contrast medium and said step of obtaining said images is performed by x-ray imaging.

Claim 10. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 7 wherein said steps of injecting contrast medium and

obtaining images are performed so that said images show contrast medium in the atrium and in at least one pulmonary vein.

Claims 11-82. (canceled)

Claim 83. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein the step of injecting contrast medium into the subject includes injecting the medium so that the medium advances forwardly into at least one pulmonary vein and the medium is carried by blood flow back toward the ostium of the vein and into said atrium around said ablation device.

Claim 84. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 83 further comprising the step of maintaining the ablation device abutting the heart wall in the vicinity of a pulmonary vein ostium during the step of injecting the contrast medium.

Claim 85. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 84 wherein the step of acquiring images includes acquiring one or more images while the ablation device abuts the heart wall.

Claim 86. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 84 further comprising the step of retracting the ablation device away from the heart wall after injecting the contrast medium.

Claim 87. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 86 wherein the step of obtaining images includes obtaining one or more images after retracting the ablation device.

Claim 88. (canceled)

Claim 89. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein the step of providing the device in an operative condition includes inflating at least one balloon within the atrium of the heart and the step of introducing

contrast medium is performed so that the contrast medium is disposed outside of the at least one balloon.

Claim 90. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 89 wherein the device in its operative condition has a central axis extending in the proximal and distal directions, and the step of introducing the contrast medium includes introducing the contrast medium through a port in a wall of the balloon adjacent the axis of the device.

Claim 91. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 89 wherein the device in its operative condition has a central axis extending in the proximal and distal directions, and the step of introducing the contrast medium includes introducing the contrast medium through an outlet port of a tubular stylet communicating with the atrium of the heart adjacent the axis of the device.

Claim 92. (previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein the step of injecting contrast medium is performed so that the contrast medium is injected only on the distal side of the device.